

you could find a real individual that should nearly exemplify the character in one of these stages, and another that should exemplify it in the next, and so on to the last, and then bring these several persons together into one company, which would thus be a representation of the successive states of one man, they would feel themselves a most heterogeneous party, would oppose and probably despise one another, and soon separate, not caring if they were never to meet again. The dissimilarity in mind between the two extremes, the youth of seventeen and the sage of seventy, might perhaps be little less than that in countenance: and as the one of these contrasts might be contemplated by an old man, if he had a true portrait for which he sat in the bloom of life, and should hold it beside a mirror in which he looks at his present countenance, the other would be powerfully felt if he had such a genuine and detailed memoir as I have supposed. Might it not be worth while for a self-observant person in early life, to preserve, for the inspection of the old man, if he should live so long, such a mental likeness of the young one? If it be not drawn near the time, it can never be drawn with sufficient accuracy.*

If this sketch of life were not written till a very mature or an advanced period of it, a somewhat interesting point would be, to distinguish the periods during which the mind made its greatest progress in the enlargement of its faculties, and the time when they appear to have reached their insuperable limits.

And if there have been vernal seasons (if I may so express it) of goodness also, periods separated off from the latter course of life by some point of time subsequent to which the Christian virtues have had a less generous growth, this is a circumstance still more worthy to be strongly marked. No doubt it will be with a reluctant hand

* It is to be acknowledged that the above representation of the changes and the contrast is given in the strongest colouring it will admit. Many men, perhaps the majority, retain through life so much of the chief characteristic quality of the dispositions developed or acquired in youth, and of the order of notions then taken in, that they remain *radically* of the same character, notwithstanding very great modifications effected by time and events; so that in a general account of men, the mental difference between the two extremes of life may be less than the physical.